

THE JACOBS REPORT

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STATE'S UNEMPLOYMENT DROPS TO LOWEST LEVEL OF YEAR

According to figures released Wednesday by the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG), unemployment in Michigan fell in August as the state saw a significant increase in the number of jobs during the month.

Seasonally adjusted, the August numbers came in at 6.7 percent, down from July's 7 percent and marking the lowest unemployment rate of the calendar year.

During August, statewide unemployment fell by 12,000 as Michigan saw an increase of 18,000 jobs. Since August 2004, the state has seen total job growth of 42,000 people, according to DLEG. In 2005 alone, there has been a growth of 33,000 jobs.

Michigan's jobless rate remains 1.8 percentage points higher than the national unemployment rate of 4.9 percent, although it now seems to be closing the gap.

PASSING GRADE FOR POST-LABOR DAY SCHOOL BILL

Now that the Legislature seems poised to pass a bill requiring public schools to delay their start date until after Labor Day, proponents and opponents alike are trying to gauge Governor Granholm's willingness to sign the bill. The measure passed the House on a 69-40 vote, before clearing a Senate committee on a party-line division after members heard testimony heavily weighted toward businesses arguing it will throw a needed boost to the tourism sector.

If the governor does sign the bill, it would provide a successful conclusion to a proposal first raised 16 years ago by former House Representative Pat Gagliardi (D-Drummond Island).

Gov. Granholm has not taken an official position on the bill. Rep. Ed Gaffney (R-Grosse Pointe Farms), sponsor of HB 4803, hopes to sit down soon with her soon to try to make the final convincing arguments for the measure.

Small business owners representing Michigan's tourist industry accounted for most of the testimony taken by the Senate Economic Development, Small Business and Regulatory Reform Committee. Bemoaning Michigan's struggling economy and a shrinking summer tourist season, HB 4803 proponents pointed to an analysis by the Senate Majority Policy Office and supported by a report from a Michigan State University professor hypothesizing that a post-Labor Day start would boost the economy by \$132 million and produce \$10 million more in tax revenue for the

state government. However, the Senate Fiscal Agency in its analysis said there would be no fiscal impact on state or local government.

The teacher unions and school districts are mostly opposed to this legislation, citing local control and MEAP preparation as issues of contention. Don Wotruba of the Michigan Association of School Boards expressed skepticism over claims of extra economic benefits. He also said that a start-date mandate would disrupt the schedules of many parents.

“I hear from many parents in my district who are very much against a later starting date,” said Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs (D-Huntington Woods). “I prefer to leave this decision in the hands of local communities.”

FEMALE CANDIDATE WORKSHOP

To address the declining number of Michigan women serving in public office, the State of Michigan Women’s Commission, in conjunction with the National Women’s Political Caucus of Michigan and the Coalition of Labor Women—Metro-Detroit Chapter, have developed a workshop entitled, *Run, Girl, Run*. The workshop will explore issues concerning women who are considering a run for office at any level of government.

For more information and/or to register, please visit the Michigan Women’s Commission’s virtual brochure at

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Run_Girl_Run_brochure_134611_7.pdf.

All Michigan legislation can be tracked at <http://www.legislature.michigan.gov/>.

State Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Franklin, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield, and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Families & Human Services Committee and the Economic Development, Small Business & Regulatory Reform Committee. She also serves on the Government Operations and Health Policy Committees.

Constituents of the 14th District may contact Senator Jacobs at sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov or toll-free at 1-888-937-4453.

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